

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

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MARDI GRAS REGISTRATION FORMS INSIDE!!!!

EDITORIALS

Consider if you will the analogy of comparing a X-dressing club to an artists' palette. On this palette are a variety of coloured paints. Each are in themselves vivid and different. To "grow" one must incorporate new colours and change one self. By mixing and matching you can change the hue and colour of any particular blob of paint...you can even discover brand new colours you have never seen before. A social club at its worst would be when all the blobs like their own colour so much that they really don't want to fart around and experiment. What you get is a palette which is very pretty, has lots of potential but becomes stagnant and detached from reality. It's not that you couldn't paint anything with the colours available...it's just that the paints are too "comfortable" to come off the palette. That palette is screwed until someone drops in and shows how much fun it can be to mix and match....to get messy.

A support group at its worst goes in the opposite direction. There nobody particularly likes the colour they have or they're afraid to stand and glow on their own. In their haste to comfort each other all the colours are just mixed together until you get one homogenous blob. And of course the instant that happens, they are screwed. They can't create any new colours anymore. When isolated this pallet develops the belief that there is only one colour in the world, and ironically expend considerable energies making sure it stays that way. The only thing this palette is good for is painting bathroom walls.

Of course what can happen within an individual palette can also happen between different palettes as well. In Canada however we have less than ten palettes and they're all far from each other. What would be nice is 50 palettes...nay a hundred palettes! You can have big palettes with lots of different wild colours in them (Illusions Social Club) and then you can have smaller palettes which specialize in specific exquisite hues (Orleans French Maid's Society).

The configuration of all these palettes really isn't important. What is important is that each palette knows where the other ones are. When you have this many palettes interacting, even if randomly, then innovation and creativity will explode. You would need palettes that would do nothing but shuttle between other palettes. You would have lots of people who would be creating more and more new wild colours. Of course all of this is just a prelude, because after a while, just making new colours again gets a little dull. So then you would have lots and lots of bored people, but now they would have lots and lots of colours to work with, and they would be able to paint anything they dam well want.

Belinda Doree

Although cross-living may be the subject of many of our dreams, one has to take into account the realities of life that can make it so difficult.

It may prove to be fun initially. New clothes and a new identity, even a new name on our plastic. But it doesn't take very long for the novelty to wear thin. The basic fact remains that it takes a transsexual more time, money and energy to accomplish the same things as a real woman. Jobs are almost impossible to come by, and the role of mother that women can have is almost unavailable to us. Unless you are extremely skilled in a specialized field, cross-living is one of the fastest ways to go broke.

Unfortunately it is also the only way to make some of us comfortable with our lives.

There are also some other things that may happen in the course of cross-living. Isolation seems to be my major complaint. Being afraid of shocking and confronting more people than absolutely necessary makes life rather restrictive. After cross-living for two years, ninety percent of the people I talk to on a regular basis are in the cross-dressing community themselves. Although there is nothing wrong with having these friends, it can give a person a skewed perception of society when exposed only to a highly specialized community. This also restricts opportunity when you take into account that everyone around you is in the same boat.

Now I hope, before another closet queen deifies the cross-gendered, that pointing out the problems that go with the lifestyle may give reason for careful planning before making the jump. The art of enjoying a cross-gender lifestyle takes a lot of effort, determination, courage and understanding.

It isn't simply a matter of just feeling that you are a woman inside. It is successfully convincing the people **around you** that you are a woman that counts the most. And that isn't all that easy. Add to this not just being a woman but being the woman that you really want to be, and you have yourself a challenge on your hands.

Because it doesn't take much effort to be a coked out ugly whore working the corner. And that is what happens to quite a few transsexuals who went into this dreaming of the power bitch in the corner office. Like anything worthwhile, you have to work your butt off to get what you want.

Diana Coltridge

April 20, 1993

Gender Mosaic
P.O. Box 7421,
Vanier, Ontario
K1L 8E4

Dear Sir/Madam,

FACT Ottawa is gender support group in the national capital region. It has been in operation for over twelve years. It is our policy and responsibility to keep as informed and as up to date as possible on all information concerning the gender community in our immediate geographic area. This is so we may provide the best referral and peer group counselling services possible to both our members and client member groups.

Recently it has been brought to our attention the Gender Mosaic is now primarily a heterosexual, (preferably married, previously married, or marriage intended), crossdressing social group. It had been previously been understood by FACT Ottawa that the original goal of Gender Mosaic was to take a broad range approach to the spectrum of gender related issues and to offer an open door policy to people of all gender "types".

In order to best serve our target are the gender community, and to avoid inappropriate referrals, FACT Ottawa requests clarification concerning the policies and focus of the Gender Mosaic Group. We would also appreciate receiving a copy of your group's constitution, plus a brief description of the group's direction for our records.

It would sadden us deeply to find out that the rumours we have heard concerning your group's direction are indeed true. This would mean that only the needs of a single segment of the gender community is being met through your group. Additionally it implies that the idea of Gender Mosaic being an "umbrella group" is invalid. Heterosexual cross-dressers do not represent the full spectrum of human experience relating to those who are gender "unique". The name "Gender Mosaic" implies just the opposite.

Please forward us the requested information at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

*Sharon McGonegal
President
FACT Ottawa*



MY REALITY

by

Niki Ross Avon

It seems that most people believe that what is common knowledge is the only right way. I beg to differ. It is my belief and luckily, I have one friend who shares this belief, that we have gone down the wrong path and that it is time to discover other options. I am talking about looking at life through the eyes, not of a man or a womyn but of a humyn being. It is time to learn about rights and of responsibilities.

We are born physically male, we learn through various means the myths and secrets of men and to exist in this world, we learn to define our self-identity within this context. This inner package is constantly evolving but the innate maleness stays unchanged. Conversely, in womyn this would be their innate femaleness. Our goal as transgenderists should be to redo ourselves in a different and hopefully, better light than what is around us.

How can we do that if we do not change that innate maleness? No matter what we say or do, that innate maleness forces us to look at, ingest and/or define everything through a male's eyes. Ergo, wearing female clothes, imitating females traits and looks become a strictly male-identified experience. Our innate maleness assures this.

How can one change one's innate maleness? The only way that I presently know of is dealing with my emotions and becoming simply, a humyn being. I am trying to be emotionally, psychologically and physically a humyn being rather than male or female. I am finally understanding my innate maleness and striving to rid myself of useless and counterproductive traits. Each person must decide for themselves what is good and what holds one back.

Of course, intellectually, that is easy but in practice, so very hard to do. It is facing, totally and without fear, whom we really are inside, accepting it and then beginning to change what we wish to change. I believe that without this "inner healing", I would be going nowhere.

That innate maleness is why the majority, but not all, transvestites cannot accept feminism: because crossdressing is, after all, only a costume and their innate maleness is raging underneath a very sheer patina. The very fact of feminism is, to them, an attack on their rights as men. TV's talk of insight and being different but alas, it is a myth men are only too eager to accept. This innate maleness is why almost all transsexuals never make it as womyn even, and especially, after the operation. They have spent untold years creating and refining a physical image yet have retained their innate maleness which is obvious to most womyn and some men. They are manufactured females who can never be womyn which explains why they rush so hard to be accepted by other men as females yet cannot make one womyn a true and understanding friend.

When transgendered males say that they are given special insights for being transgendered, it rings hollow. The only insight gained is what it feels like to be a male imitating womyn, nothing else. It gives no real insight on womyn, only on our own maleness. To think otherwise without changing the **core being** is wishful thinking and self-delusion.

Our loosely associated underground (it is not a community) was created for and is based on male beliefs, not humyn beliefs. We revel in our maleness and cannot see the world and life in any other way. The most exhilarating moment of my healing has been admitting that I am not perfect: that I don't have all the answers and that it's ok to make mistakes. Only God is perfect and she prefers to make us earn our way to Her.

Being transgendered is a gift, a life affirming gift or it could be. Why destroy this gift by hanging on to male induced fantasies? Why not open your hearts and emotions and laugh and learn and allow yourselves to be humyn? Forget being male or female, just be a joyous humyn being first. Then, perhaps, you can choose to relearn traits with womyn's myths and secrets.

Unfortunately, most transgendered men want to remain men at all costs and this present system suits their needs. They are not even remotely interested in any real inner change. You'll know them as the rule makers and forbidders of so many things. They need to control their environment to dissuade any real changes in themselves or anyone around them.

They are the forever talkers who share their thoughts rather than their emotions. Talking from their heads and not their hearts and emotions. They are the barracudas who try to mentally steal all ideas without understanding the meaning behind them. It is why they cannot grasp where some of us are at even if we've been telling them for over a year. The sad part is that more womyn are beginning to think like them all the time.

Why is it that I can say this to a womyn and she understands yet transgendered men don't? Do we speak a different language? Do words have different meanings for us? Why can't they grasp how and why my life has changed since I found my emotions? And why we have so little in common to share anymore.

I do not feel superior or feel like I know anything special. I just realized that this is my reality. I share this belief not to persuade anyone or because I hope someone will care but because I do care. I hope some grasp my meaning to think as you wish. It is conversely, my right to let go of a dying system.

I hope to some day meet some of you and share more and learn from you. Until then, I will continue to not be a part of what you are. No anger, no histrionics, just a well met and see you around.

P.S. What is the difference between a transvestite, a transsexual and a womyn?

A TV would spend his rent money on clothes, a TS would spend his rent money on hormones and the womyn supports his kids.

WORKING EN FEMME

by

Joanne Law

The most recent challenge I faced occurred during the spring of 93. I had been visiting a store in Ottawa several times a month trying to get the owner to sell our Survival Shopping Guide and to get Tapestry on the shelves. He was a little hesitant to do this, but when I told him they were best sellers, and would not stay on the shelves very long, he decided to do it. This store sells books and toys for the adult person, leather and lingerie, creams and lotions for sexual pleasure. It did not bother him to see me dressed as Joanne or Glenn at his store. All the employees enjoyed the casual conversations on cross-dressing, about me and the group, Gender Mosaic. The store had on occasions helped cross-dressers find that special frilly item in XX or XXX sizes. I was able to leave our group calling card. The staff gave the cards to customers who they thought might fit into our non-sexual gatherings. I have received at least two calls a week about our group. All first time callers, and a relief to them that there was a group in Ottawa. By the way, the Shopping Guide and Tapestry were sell outs.

Just for a lark, I asked the owner if he would like a cross-dresser on his staff. A few hums and haws were heard and then the decision was made. Joanne got the job! A real job, a real store, real customers. It was part time and I was going to work en femme. What more could a crossdresser want. That first Sunday I awoke early and started my transformation; it took about 2 hours to get ready. What skirt should I wear and what blouse...decisions decisions. Finally after much thought, I picked up a fuchsia skirt and white blouse, my lingerie was silky and lacy. Jewelry, 3 inch heels, my makeup and hair just right to finish the ensemble.

Grabbing my purse I left my apartment for my first day at work as a female. I was elated at the idea of helping a customer, and working the cash. I was a little early so I went for a coffee at a restaurant close by waiting for Tracy to open the store. It had snowed about 6" that night, so in heels and skirt, Tracy and I shovelled the snow to make a path to the door. We had to dig into the snow bank

left by the plows, quite a task in heels. Sweeping the floor and dusting the shelves was part of the work schedule. Tracy enjoyed my company and we talked for hours about everything. A few customers entered and looked around, they would sometimes ask for assistance but most kept to themselves. If asked, either Tracy or I would help. It was great being accepted for who I was, never a sly remark or negative reaction on my being there. The sales were OK for a Sunday, counting the cash and setting the alarm we left the store into another snow storm which had started. I drove Tracy home, and I went for a bite to eat.

Each Sunday I worked with a different girl, Hanna, Vee and another Tracy, fantastic ladies with an open mind. After several weeks the owner asked me if I could work full time. Being out of work at the time I accepted the challenge. Yes I was working full time as a woman and loving every minute of it.

I had to buy a new wardrobe as most of my clothes were casual. Dresses skirts blouse and panty hose by the box. This was a whole new life style. Each morning trying to decide what I was going to wear. Decisions, decisions...my oh my. It was the ultimate high, working and enjoying the feeling. Sometimes after work we would shop as girlfriends at the malls finding out where the sales were. What an experience. The job lasted four months and it was fun. During my stay at the store I was able to talk to other cross-dressers and I related to their shyness of buying that special garment, and telling them about Gender Mosaic and other support groups like ours and that they were not alone.

As Maggy Muggins would say to the farmer, "Mr. Megarity I don't know what will happen tomorrow. Bye for now."



Dear Diva,

I've met this woman. She is twenty-three with long red hair and is stunning. She has a Master's Degree, is well read, articulate, professionally employed and is fun to be with. It didn't bother her at all when I told her that I was a tranny. She found it "intriguing". She invited me to join her at her cottage for the weekend to check out her dentist's chair. She told me to bring four black neckties, a box of ACE bandages and a package of Saran Wrap. What does this mean?

*Yours truly,
Perplexed*

Dear Perplexed,

The whistle must be blown on these "liberated women". They are repressed freaks who denounce their true feminine natures and mask a deep-felt fear and paranoia of men through material well-being. They give themselves away by showing an unnatural interest in medical supplies and food preservation packaging materials. Your soul is in mortal danger. Fear not as there are excellent co-dependency clubs in your area. You *can* be helped. As for that heathen of yours...just give me her name and number and I'll take care of everything. Trust me.

Dear Diva,

Just wondering...what do psychiatrists and sperm have in common?

Curious

Dear Curious

Both have a one in one million chance of being human.

ASK DIVA

DIANA'S MAKE-UP TIPS

by

Diana Coltridge

I have always been asked about how I do my make-up and I've even had my face called a work of art. I have a tried and true method and I've yet to come across a better way of laying down foundation. After all, there is no sense in spending a fortune in your appearance if your face doesn't look the best it possibly can.

I start by shaving with a fresh blade (Gillette Sensor gets my brownie points) After you finish shaving, gently blot your skin with a towel and use one spritz of your favourite perfume for each side of your face. Women's eau de toilette has essentially the same chemical composition as men's after-shave. This tightens the pores and stops razor burn in it's tracks. Then you use a moisturiser appropriate for your skin type. Foundation never seems to work very well without this stuff. With it, your colour just glides right over your face. For \$10.00 you can get Marcelle's Moisture lotion or Revlon's Moon Drops. For about \$30.00 you can get Clinique's dramatically different moisturizer. There are dozens of perfectly good brands out there so take your pick.

As for the foundation itself, my nominee for best transvestite's foundation has to be Clinique's Continuous Coverage Make-up. Although I no longer use it because I've rid myself of facial hair over the years, I have yet to see something that behaves like it does. Most make-up consultants insist you use a sponge but I find that since everybody knows how to use their fingers, they work perfectly fine. Take the tiniest dab and work it onto you moisturized skin. It works best if you cover the parts that don't need it very much with a very thin layer and then go back over the parts that do need it with a second layer and blend it in. Use very bright lighting to check for any lines that may need blending.

It is rather important that this part of the process is done while your skin is still moist from washing and shaving. Don't take a break until you've finished laying down you liquid foundation.

If you find that your foundation looks separated when it comes out of the tube, well, it has

just about had it. Keep your tube in a cool place over the summer months if you want it to last.

After this, it is time to use a powder type foundation. Women at this point use loose powder but I find it lacks coverage. My pick is either Lancome's Dual Finish or Clinique's Double Powder Super Face Powder. They are essentially the same thing, except Lancome is scented and Clinique isn't. Use a big brush to lay this over your liquid foundation. (Before I forget, always keep that little plastic disk that you find between the sponge and the powder in your compact. By keeping your sponge and powder separated, your \$30.00 investment lasts two to three times longer.) If you still see a bluish undertone along your jawline through all of this, use a little dash of a warm coloured blusher to cancel this colour out. Just a dash on your powder brush.

Apply powdered blush along cheekbone and don't waste your time with three coloured blush compacts. All this trickery with highlights and contours can end up looking very fake quite easily. So keep it simple and try to avoid any harsh edges.

As for the lips I use a very simple technique. Use a pencil to colour in the entire lip. If you are a smoker, you can even leave it at that. It may feel dry but it will last through an evening with very little upkeep. I've spent a fortune on pencils over the years. Christian Dior is a very moist pencil for \$18.00. Shiseido is a middle of the road type for about \$12.00. L'Oreal was a complete waste of time at \$8.00. And for the surprise of my life, The Rialto pencils from Shopper's Drug Mart were an absolute dream for a buck and a half. I've been using Rialto pencils for brows and eyeliner too, and I've never been so pleased. (So yes, there are bargains out there, but it can cost a fortune to find them.)

After the pencil, use a dash of matching lipstick to gloss it up and to use over the course of the evening. Kiss a piece of tissue to pick up excess. Useable lipsticks run from about \$6.00 for the drugstore varieties to the \$20.00 I forked out for a Christian Dior (moisturizing to a fault.) Chanel runs for around \$25.00 (very dry, long lasting). Orlane de Paris is \$18.00 (great texture but disappears, gorgeous case.) Ultima II goes for around \$12 (great matte lipstick but has a cheap looking case.) I'm

certain every transvestite already has a favourite, so I won't go on.

Now for the eyes. The first step is to use a sharpened eyeliner around the eye. There are various ways to do it. All the way around, all the top and the outside half of the lower, or just the upper. Take your time applying it and keep it as thin a line as you can possibly manage. For daytime, it is best to avoid black. Grey or chocolate makes a world of difference. Extending the line beyond the eye is a fashion dinosaur, though liquid liner over your shadow is making quite a comeback for those that think they can carry it. As for eyeshadows, any more than three colours is overkill. (I'm guilty of that myself.) Use a light colour for the inner half of the lid and the center, a middle colour for the outer third and a dark for the crease on the outer half and for a little bit of extra lining. For brands I suggest spending twenty or thirty dollars on a duo Orlane, Christian Dior, or Shiseido. As for Maybelline and Covergirl, I've never tried them, but I'd be wary.

To avoid smearing your mascara after doing all that work, fold a piece of tissue and hold it under your bottom lashes while you're doing your application. Blink a few times onto this tissue and girl, you've avoided a mess! This is especially useful if you find that your eyelid won't stay still for you.

Something that is very current is plucking your eyebrows to excess and then pencilling it back in with a thin line of beige. All I can say is go for it. If you do it on Friday (within moderation), quite a bit will be back for Monday morning. Pluck out the bottom half of the brow and try to arch it in the process. I hear Sande out on Carling does a wonderful job of waxing eyebrows if a pair of tweezers makes you squeamish.

As for buying your cosmetics at a pharmacist, try to avoid it. If you must, use a location with a high volume of sales like the Rideau centre or Bayshore. It is about the only way of ensuring that your make-up is within reasonable bounds of age. Don't buy your cosmetics at Woolworth's, Kmart or the Biway. They have racks and racks of old make-up that are rarely, if ever, thrown out.

Give Me A Break Please !!!

by

Sharon McGonegal

This past week I was visited by two people whom I had met several months ago. Both of these people are generally good and I like to consider them my friends. Unfortunately and certainly not for their own good, they will not come to our meetings. One won't come because of the location of our meetings. The other won't come because he is afraid to tell his girlfriend and seemingly, must report his whereabouts to this girlfriend on a twenty-four hour, seven days a week basis. From what these two say, they could sure use our help and a great deal of straightening out.

I guess what really annoys me about them is that they both attempted to belittle my efforts to live as a woman and to claim that they both were further ahead than I am. I'm not in a contest with anyone, but at this point I certainly don't need any negative influences. I'd just like to go through some of the comments both of these people said.

"If it wasn't for my girlfriend, I'd start living as a woman right away."

There's always an "If it wasn't for X, I'd just go and live as a woman." I know this from my own personal experience. So often I've thought that if I could just get rid of one problem than I'd be free to live as a woman. But so often I realized once I'd worked through one thing, there was always another waiting behind it. And usually this was another reason that I couldn't yet make up my mind. Of course whenever I try to tell someone this, they either don't listen or they don't believe me. Usually they don't listen.

The truth of the matter is that once they do separate from their girlfriend or wife, new issues will arise which they either just haven't thought of yet, or they have avoided thinking about in the past. I won't deny the possibility that maybe the girlfriend or the wife is the last issue, but frequently if not usually, it isn't the last issue to be dealt with. Very rarely does the "If it wasn't for..." argument hold any water.

So many people also say that once problem X is out of the way, then they'll just go and live as a woman. Get a job right away and be a woman, as if to say that all of this is easy. Wake up and smell the roses please! It is really very unlikely that someone is going to "just go and live as a woman". Once problem X is out of the way then the real issues come into play. Are you ready, are you capable of doing it, is it really what you should be doing, and most importantly do you have the courage, to name a few.

Living as a woman means no excuses. You can't wash all your makeup off every time you're too scared to do something as a woman and still consider yourself to be living as one. You can't just go around wearing clear nail polish and thinking inside your head that you're a woman and consider yourself to be living as a one. Living as a woman and especially getting a job as a female, is very difficult and very stressful initially. It takes a great deal of thought and agonizing over whether to start or not. And it makes doing many things that you took for granted i.e. Buying groceries, wine for dinner, putting gas in the car, running to the store for cat food, etc. much more stressful than ever before.

"If I was working as a woman I wouldn't be the least bit afraid."

This comment really is a hard one to understand for me. It is as if the people that say this just haven't thought anything through. They assume that once they are living and working as a woman, that this automatically means that they are going to appear perfectly female in every way. This really is an attitude of fantasy more than anything. What really gets me is that these people are also the one's who are too afraid to even step outside wearing a dress. Yet somehow they claim that if they were working as a woman than they wouldn't be worried about anything.

"I don't understand why you would be putting yourself through such hardship by working on these low paying jobs. If I were you, I'd get a high paying job as a male, save up enough money, and then change myself into a woman."

I heard this one from both people and again the element of fantasy seems to be playing a big role

in their thinking. This idea suggests that there is no importance in integrating one's self into society by working and living among other people. To me it would be pointless and foolish to live as a man, save up thousands of dollars, go to Baghdad (that's probably the only place you'd find a willing doctor under these circumstances) and have SRS, breast implants and whatever other operations you need so that you become a "woman".

I really believe that you can't change genders in a vacuum, isolated and separate from the real world. It is just too important to work first in your chosen gender, to be around others in your chosen gender, and to do as much living as possible in your chosen gender in the real world before you have any surgeries. It is the only way that you can really be sure that it is what you want because until you do this you really have no idea what it is like to be that gender.

Very important also is the fact that until you actually work as a woman, you will have no idea as to whether or not you will be able to support yourself as a woman. Staying isolated and doing it all without living in the new gender first is a big mistake and it is just once again making the whole thing a game or a fantasy. Luckily we have doctors and psychiatrists who are aware of this and make surgery impossible without the real life test.

"I'm further ahead than you in knowing what I want because I know that I want the operation and you don't sound sure yet, and so I think of myself more as a woman than you do."

When I heard this one, it really got me. Here's someone who is too afraid to go outside dressed as a female, someone who appears to be doing absolutely nothing to resolve their gender identity, telling me that they are further ahead and more sure of themselves as a woman than I am. Again the element of fantasy is apparent. If this person really wants to have SRS in real life, why are they not doing anything towards this end? (Oh I forgot, they're waiting for problem X to go away, they're working as men to save up for SRS, boob jobs, etc., and then they'll just simply go and get a job the next day as a woman.)

"I'm just going to go and borrow the money and go and have the operation. There's no reason for me live as a woman first. Once I have the operation then I'll have no problems just going ahead and living as a woman."

People who say this seem to have this magical belief that having a vagina is going to change the way they feel inside as a person so that they will feel just like a woman. All of their maleness is just going to evaporate or be released (perhaps through their new body cavity ?) into the air. They'll act and sound and appear to everyone as a perfect woman all because now they have a vagina.

To me this a way of trying to avoid doing all of the really difficult things involved in transition. If you look at it this way then you don't have to think about how you are going to pass, and you never have to face any of the fears that you have about going outside as a female. In fact you can live in a state of denial about all of your fears in this area. Sorry but having a six inch deep tunnel bored out between your legs does not make you feel any differently. Except that initially you'll feel a great deal of pain. These people really have to face up to the fact that yes, you really have to face the fear of living as a woman first.

The people who say things like this seem to think that once they have a vagina that people will be forced to accept them as women, regardless of whether they appear to be women or not. Let's face another reality, no one is ever going to see your vagina when you are in public or at work so having a vagina won't make any difference to their perception of you. Okay, I suppose that you could pull off your skirt and panties in front of the staff and say "See I'm a woman" but I wouldn't recommend this.

"I live as a woman six hours a day at home. I do this by sitting and moving like a woman. And I don't think that I need to dress as a female in front of people. The fact that I feel like a woman inside means that I should be able to get the operation."

The person who said this also said that I was just being like a transvestite since I felt that it was important to go out as a woman and to be seen by

others. This person claimed that he would be quite happy to be living as a man with a vagina, and that it is only his internal feelings that matter. Well I guess I can understand this, although it is pretty unusual and certainly not an acceptable way to feel if one is seeking approval for SRS from a doctor. Again to me this person is just simply too afraid to go out as woman and has therefore convinced himself that it is not important. I personally don't go out as a woman in order to get a kick out of "fooling" people or to get a turn on. My desire to go out and be seen by others is so that I can gauge how successfully I can be in living as a woman for the rest of my life. Again this person is trying to downplay the importance of appearing as a woman in public as a way of avoiding his fear of actually going out.

"I'm not going to see Doctor X again. I went and saw him for the first time and he turned me down for SRS."

Of course he turned this person down. It was the only sensible thing to do. You don't go to see a psychiatrist and expect to get SRS if you haven't ever even gone outside as a woman or worked as one. You shouldn't even bring up the subject as being your main concern. When these people see a psychiatrist for the first time, they should only discuss their gender identity issues if they haven't done anything themselves towards becoming female. ie. Electrolysis, going out, knowing how to use makeup, getting their own clothes, working, etc. You can't expect to get hormones or surgery without having done any preparation. No matter how scary it is to do on your own, you have to do a lot on your own.

Do you suppose that the reasons the people who say these things won't come to our meetings really isn't the reason they say? Maybe they fear that if they came to a meeting, then all of their fantasies would fall apart. The really unfortunate thing about them is that they just will not listen to me when I try to tell them otherwise. I don't care if someone thinks they are further ahead than me. I'm not competing with anyone other than myself. I'd just feel better if they had their beliefs for the right reasons.

If I continue as I am on my transition I don't think I will be willing to give time to people like this anymore. As some of them are my friends, I'm reluctant to let them go. However they do have a

negative effect on me as they invalidate my feelings by being so insistent that they are right and that I am wrong. I know that you don't have to agree on everything to be someone's friend but eventually I may have to break off contact with the fantasy transsexuals.

Stephanie and Estela go to Toronto!
(or shop till you drop)

by

Stephanie



Well we finally get to get away by ourselves after two years of trying and dreaming. We left for Toronto on Friday night for our whirl wind trip. We arrived in T.O. on Saturday morning at about 7.30 am, not much to do but to look for a place to have breakfast. After eating, we were off! Starting in Chinatown, we bought wonderful china plant pots that would of cost us three times the money at home, (Estela could bargain anyone down).

Next came the shop I had longed for, The Wildside! We walked and started to look around, I found a few things that I had dreamt about buying and Estela asked the person at the front. Jay was very helpful, even to the point that when Estela had raised her shirt and had asked him if she need hip pads, he assured her that she did not, but that they would be very useful to me. After talking to Jay and getting some experienced help with a few questions we both had, we departed for Sherway gardens in Mississauga.

Sherway Gardens is not a recommended mall if you are not Diamond Jim, but we did find a nice summer dress and locket and chain for Estela for Mother's Day. After figuring out that we wanted Dixie mall we reorient our selves to the bargain hunt. Estela tried on a multitude of outfits before we gave up and had a late afternoon snack and decide to focus on clothes for our kids. On the way back to where we had started she eyes a suit that might be suitable for us. She was trying the outfit when the owner of the store tried to give me his opinion of women and their shopping ideals, little did he know who would be wearing the particular outfit to dinner that evening.

Back downtown Toronto we showered and rested in our room while we decided what we were going to wear out. Well next came the sharing of the bathroom while we both worked on making ourselves beautiful. We dressed and we departed the room with some reservations. Walking on the elevator, we saw two adult male and two boys around 12, thinking to myself this could be the hardest test for a wife of a C.D. to face right away, Estela just threw out her chest and started to talk to me. After getting to our vehicle I congratulated her on keeping her cool.

Upon arriving at Pymblets she was a little nervous, but after being greeted by another C.D. she became comfortable. We were sat at an elevated table in the window, (I'm glad she had gotten over any fears at this point). We ordered our meal which was reasonably priced and started to enjoy each others' company and checking out the restaurant. After looking around we noticed that nothing matched, everything was odd! What a comfortable place for our first outing together for dinner. Service was impeccable, yet not intrusive to the point that Estele thought the waiter deserved a better than 15% gratuity.

During dinner a local C.D. approached us and recognizing me as a friend, called out "Dana". After my denial Estela tried to talk to this person, but to no avail. But thanks to her, my wife and friend renamed my female persona Dana. After we had finished dinner Estela suggested that we take a cruise down Yonge street, what a crazy thing to do on a Saturday night, it seemed to me that half of the population of Toronto must of been out. We travelled down Yonge

from Bloor to just past Queen street. During our ride we had a lot of stopping and starting due to the traffic and number of pedestrians on the street, nobody noticed the sweet friends in the Red van. Later we returned to our hotel for a good night sleep, feeling very satisfied after our adventure.

Unfortunately I can not express all the wonderful feelings I have in sharing my alternate persona with my wife on paper with you but I am extremely fortunate in having her.

OPENMINDEDNESS

by

Diana Coitridge



When the closet Transvestite finally comes to grips with what he is and realizes it is counterproductive to keep it tucked away in the closet, there is a frightening stereotype that pops up any time he tells his mate or his friends. Almost inevitably, the first question he is asked is, "Does that mean you're gay?" Certainly this must be a frightening aspect of coming out. Undeniably, the gay Transvestite, or the Drag Queen has been more publicly visible than the heterosexual variety. And the general perception among society is that all Transvestites do a good job of impersonating Marilyn Monroe and/or Cher and that they chase burly construction workers for meaningless relationships.

Although this is far from the truth, (Though I could probably muster up a decent Liza Minelli, and I am living with somebody in the construction field...) the married, heterosexual cross-dresser has to live with this initial impression of what being a Transvestite is all about. And in order to protect himself from having everybody think he is a fag, he becomes doubly protective of his masculinity.

This makes for a beautiful set-up for a societal divide and conquer. Instead of associating with and organizing with the multitude of Drag Queens and Transsexuals out there, the tendency is to say, "But I'm not one of them!" and to leave it at that. It seems to be a natural thing to do, leaving transsexuals and cross-dressers feeling a little uncomfortable with each other with neither knowing why. And yet both groups have a wealth of experience and resources that could prove even more invaluable if shared.

Drag Queens have been very vocal in getting the right to party where they want. Anybody with a knowledge of Gay history will tell you about the Drag Queens who started the Stonewall Riot in New York City during the early seventies. Quite a few can tell stories that would make the heterosexual Transvestite's stomach quiver. And having the freedom that comes with having nothing to lose, quite a few have developed a sense of style that could blow your mind.

Transvestites, in general, have spent quite a bit of their lives building up a stable career, a stable marriage, and quite a nice life in general. I have never met so many together people before I started meeting with Gender Mosaic. They usually have everything so together that it just boggles the Drag Queen's mind that this kind of person might have a pair of six inch heels in their closet.

These two groups of people would make a logical match but it seems that neither knows very much about the other's existence. I don't know what it's like for the average Transvestite, but most Drag Queens don't even know that there is a heterosexual variety of the species.

I think it should be pointed out to both groups, that although it may be a little uncomfortable for the insecure, it does neither group any service to ignore the assets and possibilities that come with openmindedness. And instead of both of us congregating to the opposite sides of the room and sneering at each other, perhaps we might be able to get something valuable accomplished.

SOME RELIGIOUS INPUT ON THE NATURE OF REALITY

Taoism:	Shit Happens
Confucianism:	Confucius Say, "shit happens."
Buddhism:	If shit happens, it isn't really shit.
Zen:	What is the sound of shit happening?
Islam:	If shit happens, it is the will of Allah.
Protestantism:	We don't deserve this shit.
Catholicism:	If shit happens, you deserve it.
Judaism:	Why does this shit always happens to us.
Agnosticism:	What is this shit?
Atheism:	I don't believe this shit.
Methodists:	Shit happens with regularity.
Presbyterians:	When God wants it to, shit will happen.
Unitarians:	Let's discuss how we are responsible for our own shit.
Jehovah Witness:	"Ding Dong".....Here! Take this shit!



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